Numb. 37.

MERCATOR:

OR,

Commerce Retrieved,

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *Britiſh* Trade, &c.

From Saturday, Auguſt 15. to Tueſday, Auguſt 18. 1713.

An Introduction to ſeveral Letters from Scotland; *of which, the firſt takes up this Paper.*
A Letter from Scotland, *explaining the Treaty of Commerce as it relates to* Scotland.
And confuting an idle Pamphlet printed there, call'd, A Poſtſcript, in Anſwer to a Letter directed to the *Mercator.*
The Concluſion, promiſing a Juſtification of all that has been ſaid in the Mercator *about the Treaty with* Portugal.

HAving printed ſeveral Letters from Scotland, in the *MERCATORS*, No. 7. 9. and 11. relating to the Treaty of Commerce; it ſeems, by the following Accounts, that ſome People in Scotland have oppoſed thoſe Letters in Print; and have, as theſe Lettres ſuggeſt, impoſed upon the People there in as groſs a manner as has been done in other Places: In Anſwer to which, we are deſired to publiſh the following Letters, which ſeem to clear up the Diſpute on that ſide. The People of Scotland will be the beſt Judges of theſe things, when they ſhall ſee the Argument on both ſides, which are moſt agreeable to Truth, and the Publick Good; ſo that it is not needful to add any thing to it.

'IT is wonderful to what Height and Extravagancies 'PARTIES will drive ſome Men; and when they 'are engaged in any meaſures, tho' never ſo deſtructive 'and unreaſonable, with what Stratagem and Arts they 'endeavour to enſnare and draw in others!

'I could not but admire a Letter I met with the other 'day printed, and crying about the Streets here, wrote 'by a *Member of the Houſe of Commons* to a Member of 'the *Royal Boroughs*, containing Arguments not only 'againſt the Bill of Commerce, but in general againſt '*any Trade* with France, even upon the advantageous 'foot of the Tariff of 1664. It was not ſufficient for the 'Author of that Letter, and his Accomplices, (for it 'was ſaid there were ſeveral others at the Cooking it up) 'to have loſt a Million of Mony to Britain by throwing 'out the Bill laſt Seſſions of Parliament; but it is neceſ-'ſary for them to poiſon the People and poſſeſs them 'with Prejudices, in order to their oppoſing it next 'Seſſions.

'Thoſe Gentlemen have expoſed their Deſigns too 'ſoon; and I hope the Nation will be ſo wiſe, and un-'derſtand their Intereſts ſo well in this matter, as by all 'means poſſible to prevent their being farther deluded 'and impoſed upon by thoſe, who have already ſacrific'd 'their Country to gratify a Party; A PARTY! who 'had ſo little regard for them in a matter of the greateſt 'Importance, that could happen to Scotland, as to con-'cur almoſt to a Man in cramming down and impoſing 'upon them that grievous and intolerable Burthen of 'the MALT TAX in the Houſe of Commons.

'As one can go no where without hearing People 'talk for or againſt the French Trade, ſo I cannot omit 'giving you an Account of a Converſation I had laſt 'Night with ſome Gentlemen, who were very full of 'the Letter from Scotland to the Author of the *MER-'CATOR*, publiſh'd in his Paper the 7th of July; 'which thoſe Gentlemen ſaid proved the Treaty of 'Commerce to be prejudicial to Scotland, and ſhew'd 'the Diſadvantage our Trade muſt be under, if that 'Treaty ſhould at any time take place.

'By the Information I had from the Papers you did 'me the Honour to ſend me, I thought my ſelf pretty 'well prepared to juſtify the Treaty, which Her Majeſty 'had ſo advantageouſly procured for her Subjects in 'general, and more particularly for thoſe of Scotland.

'After ſome general Diſcourſe concerning the Bill of 'Commerce, I ask'd them if they had read it? They 'told me, they had not; but, that they heard it tended 'towards the Encouragement of the Linnen and Wool-'len Manufactures in France, and would ruin both our 'Manufactures and Fiſhery: for few or none of them 'could be Imported into France, but upon ſuch high 'Duties, as are next to a Prohibition.

'I told them they had been miſinformed, and that the 'Bill did not ſo much as mention any thing of the Lin-'nen and Woollen Manufactures, or Fiſhery either of 'Great-Britain or France; and, that nothing was inten-'ded by the Bill, but to take off ſome part of the high 'Duties impoſed upon Wine, Brandy, and other French 'Goods, by ſeveral Acts of Parliament in England, to 'which Duties Scotland was ſubject by the Union: And 'this being all that was intended by the Bill of Com-'merce, except that the Prohibition of French Lace was 'likewiſe taken off, as it had been of Flanders-Lace ſome 'Years before; I deſired they would impartially give

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'their Judgment, what Prejudice it would have been to 'Scotland, if those Duties had been reduced.

'It is certain, that it was very much to the Prejudice 'of Scotland, and justly complain'd of as a Hardship, 'that the Customs and Duties upon Goods Imported 'and Consumed there, should be raised, upon the Uni- 'on, to the same with those of England; and can the 'reducing a part of those Duties, be now disadvanta- 'geous?

'The easier the Duties are upon such Merchandizes 'as are necessary, and will be Imported and Consumed 'there, as Wines, Brandies, Salt, &c. it is the better 'for the People where it is Consumed, tho' perhaps less 'Mony will be Exported and paid into the Exchequer.

'Sure Scotland would have no reason to complain if 'the Duties over all Britain were reduced to what they 'were before the Union.

Those Gentlemen told me, they had not heard that 'Account of the Bill, and would superceed their Judg- 'ment in that matter till they knew farther of it; but 'in the mean time they would go upon the Letter from 'Scotland to the Author of the *MERCATOR*; and 'first they say, it contain'd several things, that are wrong 'in Fact.

'I told them, I had read the *MERCATOR*, and 'had compared the particular Merchandizes mentioned 'therein, with the Tariff of 1664. which was the 'Rule, by which our Duties in France were to have been 'paid, if the Treaty had taken Effect; and the Edict 'and Arrest of the French King in 1701. by which our 'Trade is now to be regulated; and that I could not 'find the least Mistake in any one of the Particulars 'mentioned in that *MERCATOR*; and this was 'such a Fact, as every Body, who could either read 'English or French, was Judge of; for an Abstract 'of the Tariff of 1664. was printed in English, while 'that Matter was in Agitation in Parliament, and may 'be purchased for Two-pence; and the Arrest of the 'French King, Anno 1701. containing the Rates, Pro- 'hibitions and Regulations of our Trade, as it stands 'at present, was published the 23d of June in the '*MERCATOR*; both which I compared with the 'Originals in French before them.

'They, upon comparing the Tariffs, &c. acknow- 'ledged, that the Letter wrote from Scotland to the 'Author of the *MERCATOR*, had been very just 'in giving an Account of the Duties upon the re- 'spective Goods and Merchandizes now, with what 'they would have been, if the Bill had passed; but 'pretended, that the Particulars, which are enumerated 'in that *MERCATOR*, for the most part, were 'not of the Manufacture or Produce of Scotland; at 'least, all the Quantities we could Export were incon- 'siderable, and that other Nations, who have Trade 'with France, can afford them as Cheap, and Cheaper 'than we; and therefore the Difference betwixt the 'low Duties we would have paid, if the Treaty had 'taken Effect, and the high Duties those Commodities 'are now subject to, are of no Import to Scotland.

'I answered, that the Merchandizes mentioned in 'that *MERCATOR*, were certainly of the Manu- 'facture and Produce of Scotland; and were for the 'most part enumerated as such, in the several Con- 'tracts made between Scotland, and the Towns of Ant- 'werp, Bruges; Doirt, and Camphere, &c. where the 'Staple hath been settled, and as such, were exempted 'from all Customs and Duties; while at the same 'time, the like Species of Goods from other Nations 'were expressly debarr'd from those Privileges; and 'the Merchants, Factors, and others, who fraudu- 'lently covered and entered the like Goods of any 'other Nation, AS SCOTS, whereby they might be 'exempted from the Duties, were highly punishable; 'and if those were the Native Produce and Manu- 'facture of Scotland, *as it is evident they are*, it was 'certainly for the Benefit of that Country, that those 'Goods should be Imported into France, at 10, 20, 30, 'and 40 per Cent. less Duty than they can be at pre- 'sent.

'For their further Satisfaction in this Matter, after 'giving Instances of the great Quantities of those Goods 'Exported from Scotland, I read to them the third Ar- 'ticle of the last Staple Contract betwixt the States of 'Zeland, and Town of Camphere, and the Royal 'Burrows of Scotland, in the words following.

In regard that all Staple Commodities, that come from the Kingdom of Scotland, *are the Natural Produce of that Country, &c. therefore it is agreed, that all the said Staple Commodities shall be free from Tolls, Customs and Duties, &c. and that the Goods following are, and shall be, reputed Staple Commodities, and none other, (Viz.)*

All sorts of Wooll and Woollen Yarn; and Woollen and Linnen Manufactures, Hydes, Skins of all sorts, Pladdins, Kersies, Scots Cloth, Stockings, Salmon, Tallow; and all sorts of Barrelled Flesh, Pork, Butter, Leather Dressed and Undressed, &c.

'And as this is the most Authentick Proof that can 'be, that those Goods are the Produce and Manufacture 'of Scotland, so no Person can deny that Lead, Coal, 'Herrings, and Barrell'd Cod, besides Tobacco, Su- 'gars, Dying-Woods, &c. which are not mentioned a- 'mong the above Particulars, are likewise Commodities 'whereof we have considerable Quantities, and which 'might have been in like manner Imported into France, 'for the most part, upon the same Duties they paid in '1664. and at least, upon as easie Duties as the French 'themselves, or any other Nation whatsoever, pay for 'the like Merchandizes, had not the Bill of Commerce 'been unfortunately thrown out; whereas now those 'Goods are either entirely Prohibited, or lye under so 'much heavier Duties than the Goods of the like kind 'from Holland are subject to, that they are able to Un- 'dersell us, 10, 20, and 30 per Cent.

'*But, say those Gentlemen*, there ought to have been 'no Goods excepted from the Tariff of 1664. For seeing 'we were to have taken off the high Duties upon Wines, 'Brandies, &c. coming from France, and put them upon 'as good a foot as any other Nation, they ought to have 'put us upon the foot of the Tariff of 1664, in every 'respect: I answered, that had we reduced their Wines 'from about 27 l. per Ton, which will be the Duty 'still payable, tho' the Treaty of Commerce should 'take Effect, to 7 l. 10 s. which was the Duty in 1664. 'and Brandies from 51 l. 9 s. 6 d. to 30 s. per Ton; 'the Wey, which is 40 Bushels of Salt, from 13 l. '15 s. to 20 s. and the rest of the Merchandizes, in 'proportion; there had been some Colour for asking 'thereof: But as these Duties were still to continue, there 'was no reason to expect it.

'But I have detain'd you too long for a Letter; I shall 'give you a farther Account of this Matter in my 'next.

I am, &c.

This Letter is so clear, and so full an Answer to these things, that no Comment need to be made thereon.

When the *MERCATOR*, in the course of its Writing, shall come to give the State of our Trade to Portugal, according to its Title, and of the Treaty with Portugal, care will be taken effectually to justify every Word of what has been already said on that subject; and to make it clear to every unprejudiced Person: So that there is no need of Digression from the necessary Work, which this Paper is upon, to take notice of the Cavils or Clamours of the Canal of Writers, who fall on the *MERCATOR*, and who stand in need of his Re- sentment, to make them considerable, but will ob- tain no other Notice here, but in the words of the Poet,

Infelix! quæ tanta animum Dementia cepit. Virg.

'LONDON: Printed for BENJ. TOOKE, at the *Temple-Gate*; and JOHN BARBER, on *Lambeth-Hill*. (Price 3 Half-pence.)